

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9310

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TGEN UR US

SUBJECT: US-USSR COOPERATION IN S&T: SCICOUNS MEETING WITH
AYKAZYAN; PROBLEMS IN DELEGATION TRAVEL

1. IN RECENT MEETING AT SCST, HEAD OF USA SECTION AYKAZYAN
DISCUSSED WITH SCICOUNS INCREASING LOGISTICS AND
PLANNING PROBLEMS ACCRUING TO STATE COMMITTEE IN HANDLING U.
S. DELEGATIONS. ACCORDING TO AYKAZYAN, THESE PROBLEMS ARE
ARISING FROM (1) GREATER PERCENTAGE OF WIVES ACCOMPANYING
WORKING DELEGATES; (2) SEPARATE TRAVEL OF DELEGATES OF A
SINGLE DELEGATION TO THE USSR.

2. ACCCOMPANYING WIVES. AYKAZYAN NOTED THAT LARGE NUMBERS
OF ACCCOMPANING WIVES ADD DIFFICULTIES IN FOUR AREAS:
(A) AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE ROOMS. (USSR HAS
RELATIVELY FEWER DOUBLE ROOMS, SCST ALSO FEELS THAT MAN AND
WIFE EXPECT HIGHER-CLASS (AND RARER) ROOMS THAN
UNACCOMPANIED MALE WOULD ACCEPT.)

(B) BILLING PROBLEMS. (PRACTICE OF MARGINAL-COST BILLING
FOR WIFE, COMMON IN US, IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH SOVIET PRACTICE
OF EQUALLY-DIVIDED COSTS.)

(C) LOGISTICS. INCLUSION OF WIVES INCREASES PROBLEMS OF TRANSPORT
OF BOTH PEOPLE AND BAGGAGE. (SCST STAFF MEMBER COMMENTED THAT
RECENT US DELEGATION HAD OVER 50 PIECES OF LUGGAGE.)

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(D) PROGRAMS FOR WIVES. AYKAZYAN STRESSED THAT SCST HAS NEITHER INTERNAL CAPABILITY NOR EXTERNAL MECHANISM (E.G., CONTRACT) TO SET UP PROGRAMS FOR WIVES. (THEY ARE STRONGLY AGAINST MERELY MAKING HOTEL RESERVATIONS FOR WIVES AND THEN, IN THEIR PERSPECTIVE, "FORCING" THEM TO ROAM ABOUT "PROGRAMLESS" (SEE COMMENT).

THE SOVIETS POINTED OUT THAT THESE PROGRAMS ARE EXACERBATED WHEN PROGRAM INCLUDES TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE MOSCOW AREA.

3. INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL. MEMBERS OF US DELEGATIONS TO THE USSR ARE INCREASINGLY TRAVELING INDIRECTLY, ARRIVING VIA DIFFERENT EUROPEAN CITIES. THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT REQUESTS THAT THE SOVIETS ARRANGE TO GRANT THE VISAS IN EUROPE. THE SOVIETTS POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THEY HAD COMPLIED WITH THESE REQUESTS, SUCH DELEGATION-SPLITTING RENDERS THE VISA WORK DIFFICULT AND THE GREETING PROCESS ALMOST UNMANAGEABLE. IN ADDITION, THE SOVIETS POINTED OUT THAT IN NUMEROUS INSTANCES THE US DELEGATES HAD NOT MET PRIOR TO ARRIVAL, AND MUCH TIME THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SPENT IN BILATERAL EXCHANGES WAS INDEED SPENT AS THE AMERICAN DELEGATION WORKED OUT ITS OWN POSITIONS. THE SOVIETS STRESSED THAT TRAVEL AS A GROUP WOULD AFFORD AMERICAN DELEGATIONS MORE PRE-VISIT CONSULTATION TIME.

4. AYKAZYAN STRESSED THAT IN NO WAY DID HE WANT TO RESTRICT AMERICAN WIVES FROM COMING, BUT FELT HE MUST MAKE KNOWN THE DIFFICULTIES THAT INCREASED NUMBERS OF ACCOMPANYING WIVES ARE PLACING UPON HIS LIMITED RESOURCES. AYKAZYAN ALSO EXPRESSED DESIRE THAT US DELEGATIONS TO USSR ARRIVE TOGETHER, EVEN IF THEY LEAVE SEPARATELY. HE AGREED TO TRY TO WORK OUT SOME ARRANGEMENT WITH INTOURIST, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT NUMBER OF WIVES ACCOMPANYING US DELEGATIONS WILL BE MORE MODERATE IN THE FUTURE.

5. COMMENT: FOR AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND ACADEMICS, TAKING THE WIFE ALONG TO CONVENTIONS OR MEETINGS IS A STRONG OLD TRADITION, A FACT SCICOUNS underscored WITH AYKAZYAN. WE BELIEVE THAT A PAST OF THIS PROBLEM IS THAT OUR OPERATION WITHIN THE AMERICAN TRADITION IS STARTING TO IMPINGE ON A SACRED RUSSIAN CONCEPT: "GOSTEPRIIMSTVO" (HOSPITALITY). THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO FEEL THAT UNDER DEVELOPING CONDITIONS THEY

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WILL BE UNABLE TO HOLD UP THEIR OBLIGATIONS AS HOSTS, WHICH, TO RUSSIANS, IS VERY SERIOUS MATTER.

6. GUIDANCE REQUESTED.
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